



Connecticut Department of
**ENERGY &
ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION**

**STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

Public Hearing – March 11, 2016
Environment Committee

Testimony Submitted by Commissioner Robert J. Klee

**House Bill No. 5583 – AN ACT CONCERNING AN AGREEMENT REGARDING ANNUAL WATER LEVEL
DRAW DOWNS AT BASHAN LAKE IN THE TOWN OF EAST HADDAM**

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony regarding **House Bill No. 5583 – AN ACT CONCERNING AN AGREEMENT REGARDING ANNUAL WATER LEVEL DRAW DOWNS AT BASHAN LAKE IN THE TOWN OF EAST HADDAM.** The Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) welcomes the opportunity to offer the following testimony.

DEEP has serious concerns about the proposal that would require the Commissioner of DEEP to enter into an agreement with the town of East Haddam and the Bashan Lake Association regarding a schedule for annual water level drawdowns of Bashan Lake. The draw down is intended to control weeds, prevent property damage and erosion into said lake and prevent reduction in association property values. However, such drawdowns impact the environmental and ecological resources and may have significant, unintended consequences.

The DEEP already has an administrative process for the request of a winter draw down of an impoundment controlled by a state-owned dam. Such process requires a municipality to submit a request on behalf of their residents. DEEP evaluates these requests on an annual basis to balance concerns of the lake community and the municipality with all natural resource and environmental concerns.

We understand the value of this impoundment, as evidenced by the \$1.5 Million repair project completed last year, funded with state tax-payer monies, which directly benefits homeowners on the lake as well as the municipality. However, given such a significant investment, the DEEP needs to manage the impoundment in a way which balances all issues.

Typically, these drawdowns require DEEP staff to physically operate a gate or manipulate an outlet structure and monitor the lake level to insure it does not get too low. Monitoring includes not only the current lake level, but tracking the ground conditions to determine runoff potential, current and

predicted weather and other variables. Given that DEEP has fewer and fewer resources to respond to these requests and to ensure the drawdowns are executed correctly, we do not support additional legislation that would dictate the deployment of our limited resources to one lake.

In summary, DEEP opposes House Bill No. 5583 – AN ACT CONCERNING AN AGREEMENT REGARDING ANNUAL WATER LEVEL DRAW DOWNS AT BASHAN LAKE IN THE TOWN OF EAST HADDAM.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on this proposal. If you should require any additional information, please contact Robert LaFrance, DEEP's Director of Governmental Affairs, at 860.424.3401 or Robert.LaFrance@ct.gov or, Elizabeth McAuliffe, DEEP Legislative Liaison, at 860.424.3458 or Elizabeth.McAuliffe@ct.gov.